Sarah Lovell

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Basic biographical data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Sarah Lovell</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other names (by-names, pseud. etc.):</td>
<td>Sarah Rebecca Hellman * Sarah Rebecca Lovell * Sarah Zucker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date and place of birth:</td>
<td>May 8, 1922, Brooklyn, NY (USA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date and place of death:</td>
<td>June 14, 1994, New York, NY (USA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nationality:</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupations, careers, etc.:</td>
<td>Copy editor, writer, party organizer, unionist</td>
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Biographical sketch

Sarah (Rebecca) Lovell was born on May 8, 1922, in Brooklyn, New York, N.Y. as daughter of Sol Hellman and Yetta Yankowitz, East European Jews who had immigrated to the United States in the early 20th century. Together with her two sisters, Anne and Molly, she grew up in the working class milieu and was only seven years old when the Great Depression began. In 1938, aged sixteen, she joined the Young Peoples Socialist League (YPSL) where she was much impressed with Harry Braverman, a then YPSL leader.

In 1940, Sarah Lovell joined the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and became a veteran to the labor and socialist movement in the spirit of James P. Cannon and Leon Trotsky. In the early 1940s, she was briefly married to a Trotskyist comrade, Eugene Zucker. After World War II, she met SWP and union activist Frank Lovell1, gave up her party activities in one of the branches of the New York City Local and followed him to San Francisco. Though Sarah Lovell soon returned to New York, she eventually decided for San Francisco, where she and Frank Lovell were married in April 1949. Later that year, the SWP sent them to Seattle for helping in a fight among the Sailors’ Union of the Pacific. A few months before they moved back to San Francisco, their daughter Joan was born (July 1950). In the early 1950s, the SWP asked them to move to Detroit where another division struggled with the party over how to proceed in the new period of political reaction (McCarthyism). Led by trade unionist Bert Cochran and accompanied among others by Harry and Miriam Braverman, a faction set up which believed, that it was necessary to scale back dramatically, dropping SWP electoral campaigns and other activities that would make party members vulnerable, adapting to the liberal trade union bureaucracy in such unions as the United Auto Workers, and in some cases regrouping with non-Trotskyist radicals in the Stalinist milieu. In 1953, shortly after Frank ran for mayor of Detroit, the Cochranites split from the SWP. The Lovells remained in Detroit, Sarah earning her living as a proofreader and copy editor.

1) For more about Frank Lovell see the bio-bibliographical sketch Frank Lovell, provided within the framework of our Lubitz’ TrotskyanaNet website

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with the Detroit Free Press and was an active member of the International Typographical Union (ITU). At the same time, she was deeply involved in the weekly Friday Night Socialist Forum of the Detroit SWP branch, the moving spirit of which were George and Dorothea Breitman. But Sarah Lovell did much more than give forums and classes: in 1957, she ran a vigorous election campaign for mayor, in 1961 she was on the ballot for Common Council, and in 1968 she was a candidate for the U.S. Congress. A defender of the Cuban revolution, she travelled to Cuba, she organized meetings and demonstrations against the Vietnam war and against racist discrimination in the U.S. She served as a branch organizer, was a Detroit delegate to the National Convention of the SWP, and in the Sixties she functioned as an alternate to the SWP National Committee. In 1969, the Lovells moved to New York City where Frank became SWP trade union director and a member of the Political Committee. Sarah remained active in her union, in anti-racist campaigns and in movements against the Vietnam war. When the new SWP leadership under Jack Barnes transformed the party away from Trotskyism and the Fourth International into an uncritical sister party of Castro’s Cuban Communist Party, the Lovells, together with a group of other renowned Trotskyist veterans under the intellectual leadership of George Breitman, resisted to this new course, forming an oppositional caucus in 1981. The three volume documentary series In defense of American Trotskyism, to which Sarah Lovell contributed as editor and co-author, vividly reflects this inner party struggle and the subsequent development of the radical socialist movement in the United States. Expelled from the SWP in 1983, the Lovells, the Breitmans and others founded the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) in 1984. Sarah Lovell was a member until 1992 when she decided to join Solidarity. Her utmost contribution to the work of the FIT was the founding and publication of its theoretical paper Bulletin in Defense of Marxism (BIDOM). From 1987 until September 1992, she hold the post of its co-editor; she also was BIDOM’s circulation manager, supervised mailings to subscribers and contributed a lot of articles and reviews. Her excellent skills as proofreader and copy-editor were much appreciated in her ten years lasting work with George Breitman on the English-language edition of Leon Trotsky's collected Writings. After Breitman's death in 1986 she was committed to various literary pursuits, writing numerous articles and supervising a variety of publishing projects including her labor of love A tribute to George Breitman: writer, organizer, revolutionary (1987).

Sarah Lovell was also a committed socialist-feminist and joined first the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and later the National Organization for Women (NOW) shortly after its founding convention and acted in its exploratory commissions until her death. On June 14, 1994, Sarah Lovell died in New York City, at age 72 of cancer. A memorial service was held at Tamiment Library, New York City, on September 30, 1994.

**Selective bibliography**

- **Selective bibliography: Books/pamphlets and journals (co-)edited by Lovell**

  Bulletin in Defense of Marxism (New York, NY) <TSB 0219>
  In Defense of Marxism (New York, NY) <TSB 0616>

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2) TSB item numbers (e.g. <TSB 0716>) refer to Lubitz’ Trotskyist Serials Bibliography, München [etc.] : Saur, 1993, which is out of print but available as PDF file within the framework of the Lubitz’ TrotskyanaNet website. In TSB you can find detailed descriptions of the respective Trotskyist journals, newsletters, bulletins and the like.

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Bio-Bibliographical Sketch

1972. - 333 pp. [& later ed.]

- Selective bibliography: Books, collections, journals, bulletins to which Lovell contributed

Bulletin In Defense of Marxism (New York, NY) <TSB 0219>
In Defense of Marxism (New York, NY) <TSB 0616>
International Viewpoint (Various places) [ISSN 0294-2925] <TSB 0726>
The Party Builder / Socialist Workers Party (New York, NY) <TSB 1178>

- Selective bibliography: Books and articles about Lovell

[Anon.]: Sarah Lovell, fighter for Trotskyism, in: The Organizer <TSB 1157>, 1994 (July/Aug.). [Obituary]

Note: More information about Sarah Lovell is likely to be found in some of the books, pamphlets, university works, and articles listed in the relevant chapters of the Lubitz' Leon Trotsky Bibliography [ISSN 2190-0183], e.g. in chapter 7.5.18

- Selective bibliography: Books dedicated to Lovell


Wolfgang and Petra Lubitz, 2006
last (slightly) rev. June 2016

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